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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Electrification Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

December 20, 1948

To: REA Field Representatives
From: Administrator
Subject: Action on Field Suggestions - Third Report

This is our third and final report concerning the many fine suggestions received in the REA field conference. Your suggestions have been of benefit to us in conducting the program of the Agency and we look forward to subsequent suggestions and criticisms that will enable us to do a better job.

As you know, the personnel in Washington offered suggestions and criticisms at their headquarters conferences. In order that you will be informed of the actions taken, we intend to send each field representative a copy of our report on the Washington suggestions.

Providing field auditors with typed copies of audit reports. (KC 23)

This suggestion has been put into effect by the Finance Division.

Visits of field personnel to Washington Office. (R. Mgmt.-9, KC 27, Butte-A & L-1)

I have recommended to the division chiefs and regional heads to arrange for Washington headquarters visits by all field representatives at least once every 18 months for the purpose of reorientation and in the interest of maintaining maximum efficiency.

Permitting field personnel to return to their field headquarters more often (KC-14)

I agree with the recommendation and have issued a memorandum to division chiefs and regional heads requesting them to arrange itineraries so that travelers be permitted to return to their field headquarters at reasonable intervals.

Loss of per diem for nonwork days immediately preceding or following leave taken. (KC-6)

When a traveler is in leave status on the work day immediately preceding or following a holiday or other nonwork days, he is entitled to per diem for the holiday or nonwork days provided he is present at his temporary duty station on the nonwork day at the close of the work day preceding and the beginning of the work day following the holiday and furnishes a statement to that effect in his voucher. (See GTR 45 (a))

For instance, in the case cited in the Kansas City conference the employee who took leave on a Friday to attend a funeral and was present at his temporary duty station on Saturday and Sunday was entitled to receive per diem for Saturday and Sunday provided he made a statement to that effect in his voucher.

Can officials directing emergency travel be held responsible for travel performed without prior written authorization (KC 20)

The answer is "yes" if that official is willing to assume that responsibility; however, REA cannot compel the supervisor to assume it. Therefore, supervisors are urged to avoid directing emergency travel until they are sure that such travel will be reimbursable under the regulations which our Travel Voucher Audit Unit must follow.

Referring vouchers to regional heads. (KC-19)

Under Government Travel Regulations only the traveler himself is authorized to change a voucher. Consequently no time would be gained by adopting the suggested procedure.

Coordination between regional division fieldmen lacking. (Butte-Mgmt. 3 KC-8, Butte-A & L-15)

The results of the recent field conferences indicate that we are not achieving enough regional coordination under our present mode of operation. Therefore, a committee has been designated to develop plans for further improving coordination at the regional level both in the field and in the Washington Office.

Concerning approval of managers. (Butte-Engr. (m) 5. KC 29. KC 31)

Partly as a result of comments made at the field meetings a new Administrative Memorandum, dated September 14, 1948, on this subject has recently been issued and sent to all field personnel. Also, a revised memorandum, dated September 17, 1948, to all boards of directors on the subject of policy and procedure with respect to selecting a manager was issued and a copy sent to all field personnel.

All of the line divisions are represented on the Committee for Approval of Managers and have ample opportunity to present the recommendations of fieldmen under their supervision. It is quite possible that a fieldman may feel that his recommendation has been disregarded because the action taken did not conform with his recommendation. This may result from different recommendations by the fieldmen of the three other line divisions. It is the recommendation of the Committee that fieldmen submit their reports as promptly as possible and in the event that they do not agree with the board's selection they are encouraged to give as much detail as possible to support their feelings.

The Committee for Approval of Managers meets regularly each Wednesday. The agenda is prepared on all actions brought to the attention of REA by the close of business on the preceding Friday. Letters and Minutes of the board of directors are screened carefully to determine whether or not there is any reason for quicker action than is indicated above. If so, the Committee holds a special meeting.

Overtime pay and compensatory leave for field personnel. (KC-17)

The official work weeks consists of forty hours, and any time in excess of forty hours is considered to be voluntary, unless there is specific prior

authorization. Because of the varying nature of their duties, some field people have considerable flexibility as to the time of the day when these hours will be worked.

Official overtime work is kept at a minimum throughout the agency and overtime pay can be approved only by the Administrator, the Deputy Administrator, or the Assistant Administrator. Any authorization of overtime to field personnel is complicated by the necessity for adequate pay roll records on which a certification could be made as to the overtime work actually performed. This record problem is less difficult in Washington, since all employees have the same office hours. However, overtime pay in Washington is rarely authorized except for special work which cannot be done during regular office hours.

Simplified field reports. (KC-18)

The field report form ADM-36 has been revised and issued to all field people. The revision of this form followed suggestions made to the Suggestions Awards Committee and suggestions made at the field conference.

Relations with generation and transmission co-ops. (Butte-Engr M-3)

The divisional responsibilities for activities with reference to power type borrowers are set forth in a new Administrative Memorandum, "Responsibilities for Activities with borrowers concerning their Distribution, Generation or Transmission facilities."

Providing field auditors with adding machines and calculators. (KC-24. Butte-F5).

On the basis of a thorough study of the field auditor requirements for adding machines and calculators and the reports from the recent field auditor's conference indicating individual needs for such equipment, the conclusion has been reached that such equipment would materially increase audit production. As a first step to meeting these needs, 15 machines are being ordered and we hope that our budget will permit the purchase of additional machines.

Travelers notification of under claims made on expense vouchers. (Roanoke-Engr.-7)

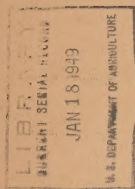
Opinions are now being obtained from responsible officials on the legality of advising REA travelers of error or omission resulting in under claims on vouchers. If the opinions are favorable, as we expect them to be, the Voucher Audit Unit will be so advised and the policy will be adopted immediately.

Time in performance of audits. (Roanoke-Fin.-7)

A standard average time for the performance of an audit is established at the start of the fiscal year. However, a time schedule is prepared for each individual audit in consultation with the auditor, with the result that the time schedule may vary considerably above or below the average depending on the conditions with reference to the particular assignment.

Sending important mail in small envelopes. (Butte Fin.-11)

We have attempted to follow this practice in the past. However, regional heads have been reminded to instruct the personnel under their supervision to send all important or rush mail in small envelopes separate from package mail.



Claude R. Wickard